



DIOCESE OF WANGARATTA
The Parochial District of Wangaratta West and The Warbys

The Fifth Sunday in Lent

6th April 2025

Ante Communion 11.00 a.m.

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

The Introduction

Open our lips, O Lord;
and we shall declare your praise.

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins,
whose mercy endures for ever.

Let us praise the Lord.
The Lord's name be praised.

Sentence

Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall
come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

Psalm 126.6

Hymn: TiS 693 [tune, Come As You Are]

1. **'Come as you are: that's how I want you.
Come as you are; feel quite at home,
close to my heart, loved and forgiven.
Come as you are: why stand alone?**
2. **'No need to fear, love sets no limits;
no need to fear, love never ends;
don't run away shamed and disheartened,
rest in my love, trust me again.**
3. **'I came to call sinners, not just the righteous;
I came to bring peace, not to condemn.
Each time you fail to live by my promise,
why do you think I'd love you the less?**
4. **'Come as you are; that's how I love you;
come as you are, trust me again.
Nothing can change the love that I bear you;
all will be well, just come as you are.'**

The Beatitudes: God calls all people to follow the way of truth and life.

Silence is kept between each Beatitude.

Let us hear our Lord's blessing on those who follow him.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who suffer persecution
for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The Trisagion is said.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

The Collect

Let us pray

Christ,
whose feet were caressed with perfume and a woman's hair,
you humbly took a basin and towel
and washed the feet of your friends:
wash us also in your tenderness,
that, embracing your service freely,
we may accept no other bondage
in your name. **Amen.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah [43. 16–21]

Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.
The wild animals will honour me, the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

Hear the word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

Psalm 126.

**When the Lord turned again the fortunes of Zion:
then were we like those restored to life.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter:
and our tongue with singing.
Then said they among the heathen:
'The Lord has done great things for them.'
Truly the Lord has done great things for us:
and therefore we rejoiced.
Turn again our fortunes, O Lord:
as the streams return to the dry south.
Those who sow in tears:
shall reap with songs of joy.
They that go out weeping, bearing the seed:
shall come again in gladness,
bringing their sheaves with them.**

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians [3. 3-14]

For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh—even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Hear the word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn: TiS 660. Tune, set or Bonnie George Campbell.

- 1. Myrrh bearing Mary from Magdala came,
seeking her Jesus, with spirit aflame;
he had commanded her sickness depart,
she now would thank him for newness of heart.**
- 2. Myrrh bearing Mary to Bethany came,
seeking her Jesus who called her by name;
there she anointed his feet and his head
with precious oils that were meant for the dead.**
- 3. Myrrh bearing Mary to Calvary came,
seeking her Jesus who hung there in shame;
and as the careless and heedless passed by,
hopeless and helpless she watched her Lord die.**

4. **Myrrh bearing Mary to death's garden came,
seeking her Jesus who'd borne the world's blame;
heart sick, she stood, till she heard the Lord's voice:
'Mary!' he said, 'I am risen; rejoice!'**

Rae E. Whitney 1927-

The Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John [12. 1-8]
Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair.

The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.)

Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

For the Gospel of the Lord,
praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Creed

Let us together affirm the faith of the Church.

**We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven**

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

A time for reflection

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The priest says

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ has promised that you will hear us when we ask in faith: receive the prayers we offer.

Jesus, friend and intercessor, you were anointed as the Saviour of the world;

we pray for the peoples of all nations:

for all who suffer hardships of war, famine, disease;
for leaders of nations and all who exercise authority;
for all who work to create a more just world.

**Break open our hearts,
that we too may pour out our lives for you
and bring your message of justice to your people.**

You were anointed as the chosen one of Israel;

we pray for your church:

for all who suffer persecution for their faith;
for missionaries, pastors and evangelists;
for all who bring your good news to others.

**Break open our hearts,
that we too may pour out our lives for you
and bring your gospel of salvation to your people.**

You were anointed as God's beloved Son;

we pray for those we hold dear and all with whom our lives are bound:

for our families and friends; for those with whom we work;
for all lonely and alienated members of our community;
for all who make our community a more compassionate place.

**Break open our hearts,
that we too may pour out our lives for you
and bring your message of love to your people.**

You were anointed to bring good news to the captive and healing to the sick;

we pray for all in trouble or distress:

for all who are weighed down by pain or grief;

for all who are sick or facing death;

for all who bring release and healing to your people.

We pray especially for

**Break open our hearts,
that we too may pour out our lives for you
and bring your words of comfort to your people.**

You were anointed for death,

but dying and rising you bring new life to others;

we give you thanks for all who have died in the faith:

for Mary of Bethany and your friends of every age;

for all who have offered to you the fragrance of their life and love.

This week we remember especially

**May we, like them, break open our lives, that,
offering to you all we hold precious,
we may find our eternal treasure in you.**

The prayers conclude with

Accept our prayers though Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.**

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Offertory hymn: TiS 83. Tune, Monkland.

- 1. Let us with a gladsome mind
praise the Lord, for he is kind:
for his mercies shall endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.**

2. **Let us blaze his name abroad,
for of gods he is the God:
for his mercies shall endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.**
3. **He, with all-commanding might,
filled the new-made world with light:
for his mercies shall endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.**
4. **All things living he doth feed,
his full hand supplies their need:
for his mercies shall endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.**
5. **He his chosen race did bless
in the wasteful wilderness:
for his mercies shall endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.**
6. **Let us then with gladsome mind
praise the Lord, for he is kind:
for his mercies shall endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.**

John Milton 1608–74 *alt.*

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings for your glory
and for the service of your kingdom.

Blessed be God for ever.

CONFESSION AND DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Human sin disfigures the whole creation,
which groans with eager longing for God's redemption.
We confess our sin in penitence and faith.

cf Romans 8.22,23

**Lord God, we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.**

**Wash away our wrongdoing
and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

cf Psalm 51

The minister stands and declares God's forgiveness.

God desires that none should perish,
but that all should turn to Christ, and live.
In response to his call we acknowledge our sins.
God pardons those who humbly repent,
and truly believe the gospel.
Therefore we have peace with God,
through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he
loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses,
made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been
saved.

Ephesians 2.5

THE GREETING OF PEACE

Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.

We meet in his name and share his peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Notices

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life and died for us,
but are alive and reign, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Hymn TiS 683 [tune, Omni Dei]

- 1. God! When human bonds are broken
and we lack the love or skill
to restore the hope of healing,
give us grace and make us still.**
- 2. Through that stillness, with your Spirit
come into our world of stress,
for the sake of Christ forgiving;
all the failures we confess.**
- 3. You in us are bruised and broken;
hear us as we seek release
from the pain of earlier living;
set us free and grant us peace.**
- 4. Send us, God of new beginnings,
humbly hopeful into life.
Use us as a means of blessing:
make us stronger, give us faith.**
- 5. Give us faith to be more faithful,
give us hope to be more true,
give us love to go on learning:
God! Encourage and renew!**

Frederik Herman Kaan 1929—

The Dismissal

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Galatians 6.14

**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all. Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

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It is, from first to last, the work of God in Christ. Paul's great theme, which runs through so many of his letters, is of God's power to make new, to recreate, to justify.

But, of course, the hard side of that, the side that Mary recognizes and Judas will not, is that the only way to be made new is through Christ, and that sharing Christ's way of life leads to the resurrection, but only through the cross. Paul is not advocating that we embrace suffering as a discipline, or because it is good for us, or out of some vague piety but because, whatever happens, we must not be parted from Christ. If clinging to Christ takes you through suffering and death then, Paul proclaims with fierce joy, that is a small price to pay for the enormous privilege of belonging to Christ.

The promise that we can, like Paul, let go of the past and be made new, resonates throughout the glorious poetry of our passage from Isaiah. God reminds Israel there are no dead ends in God, no situations beyond his creative resourcefulness. There is a clear parallel between the power of God that brought Israel out of Egypt, against the massed forces of the mighty Egyptian army, and the power of God to create and recreate. In Isaiah 43:19, God talks about the 'new thing' that he is doing, and the language of newness, of 'springing forth', is reminiscent of the language of the Genesis creation story. We have again one of those insights into the character of God, that God's faithfulness and his inventiveness go hand in hand. It is because God will never give up, never turn away, never abandon what he has made that the power of God to create and raise from the dead is always at work. Be prepared to let go of the old things, God urges, and look out for the 'water in the wilderness'.

Jane Williams. (2003). [*Lectionary Reflections: Year C*](#) (pp. 52–53). SPCK.

The Fifth Sunday of Lent

Our Lenten readings have now brought us face to face with what this season is about. We are attempting, with some discipline, to prepare ourselves for Good Friday and Easter. At the start of Lent, with the story of his testing in the wilderness, we see Jesus accepting his calling, with all that will be involved in that. Now at last, in the passage from John's Gospel, some of those around Jesus are beginning to understand where the road to Jerusalem is really leading.

John sets the story of the anointing of Jesus' feet in the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. You might expect that they would be the last people to anticipate the cross. They, more than any, have cause to know the power of Jesus, and to believe that death has no hold on him. But Jesus explicitly states that Mary's anointing is a burial anointing, and that she is knowingly performing a prophetic act.

Mary's act is a pivotal moment of loveliness and intimacy between two, other, brutal sets of preparation for Jesus' death. John paints a very physical picture, with the details about Mary's hair, and the fragrance of the perfume, as though he wants us to *feel* the comfort being offered to Jesus. At last, someone accepts and honours what he is to do, rather than denying or misunderstanding. But just before the anointing, we see the Jews planning how they will arrest Jesus, and immediately after the anointing, we see Judas preparing himself to betray.

In keeping with one of John's constant themes, there is no grey area in which we might try to understand either Judas or the Jews. In John's Gospel, there is always a stark choice between light and dark, and Judas has chosen the dark. Perhaps he might have tried to justify his anger at Mary's extravagance—after all, he could point to the many occasions when Jesus taught the importance of caring for the poor. But John allows him no such excuse. Essentially, in all the choices Judas has already made to bring him to this point in the story, he has been setting himself against Jesus.

It is particularly moving to turn from Judas to Paul. Paul is someone who has allowed himself to be changed by God, to be made new, and he knows how things might have been different. He lists all the claims of family, religion, status and personal choice that might so easily have kept him from Christ, and they make an impressive catalogue. Yet what flows through this passage is Paul's overwhelming sense of joy and privilege in knowing Christ Jesus. But even this knowing is not something he prides himself on. No effort of his own, no goodness of his own, has brought him here.